

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. In a client device, a method comprising:
  - 5 receiving a request for playback of digital audio or video content stored on the device;
  - determining an allotted playback duration for the device;
  - determining an elapsed playback duration for the device, the elapsed playback duration representing an amount of time previously consumed by the device while
  - 10 rendering digital audio or video content;
  - determining whether a predetermined relationship between the elapsed playback duration and the allotted playback duration for the device is satisfied; and
  - regulating playback of at least the requested digital audio or video content if the predetermined relationship between the elapsed playback duration and the allotted
  - 15 playback duration for the device is determined to be satisfied.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the request for playback of digital audio or video content is received via a user input device.
- 20 3. The method of claim 1, wherein determining an elapsed playback duration for the device further comprises:
  - determining a current elapsed playback duration for the device;
  - determining a rendering time representing an amount of time it takes for the digital audio or video content to be rendered by the client device; and

adding the rendering time to the current elapsed playback duration to obtain a new elapsed playback duration.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein playback of the requested digital audio or video content track is denied if it is determined that the relationship between the allotted playback duration and elapsed playback duration is satisfied.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:  
facilitating playback of the digital audio content if it is determined that the elapsed playback duration does not exceed the allotted playback duration.

6. The method of claim 4, further comprising:  
indicating to the user at least one of the elapsed playback duration and the allotted playback duration.

7. The method of claim 4, further comprising:  
indicating to the user the elapsed playback duration in relation to the allotted playback duration.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the digital audio or video content is encoded in accordance with at least one of an advanced audio encoding algorithm, an adaptive multi-rate encoding algorithm and an MP3 encoding algorithm.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

denying playback of the requested digital audio or video content if the elapsed playback duration added to a run length associated with the requested content exceeds the allotted playback duration.

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10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

denying playback of additional digital audio or video content stored on the device in addition to the requested digital audio or video content if it is determined that the elapsed playback duration is equal to or exceeds the allotted playback duration.

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11. The method of claim 1, wherein the allotted playback duration is determined based upon rights intrinsic to the device.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the allotted playback duration is determined

15 based upon data received from the content rights server.

13. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

periodically increasing the allotted playback duration prior to the allotted playback duration exceeding the elapsed playback duration.

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14. The method of claim 10, wherein the allotted playback duration is increased based upon entitlements granted to the user by a service provider.

15. In a digital content rendering device, a method comprising:  
rendering one of a plurality of audio or video content items;  
determining an elapsed playback duration for which digital audio or video content  
has been rendered; and

5 regulating further content rendering by the digital content rendering device if the  
elapsed playback duration satisfies a predetermined relationship with respect to an  
allotted playback duration.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the elapsed playback duration represents by an  
10 amount of time for which content has been rendered by the digital content rendering  
device.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein the elapsed playback duration represents a  
quantity of data processed by the digital content rendering device to render content on  
15 the device.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein regulating comprises denying further content  
rendering by the digital content rendering device if the elapsed playback duration  
satisfies a predetermined relationship with respect to the allotted playback duration.

20 19. The method of claim 18, wherein the allotted playback duration represents at  
least one of an amount of render time for which content may be rendered on the digital

content rendering device, and a quantity of data that may be processed by the digital content rendering device to render content on the device.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising:

5        facilitating playback of the digital audio content if it is determined that the elapsed playback duration does not exceed the amount of render time corresponding to allotted playback right.

21. The method of claim 15, wherein regulating further content rendering comprises  
10        facilitating content rendering at a reduced level of functionality or quality if the elapsed playback duration satisfies a predetermined relationship with respect to the allotted playback right.

22. In a digital content rendering device, a method comprising:

15        identifying a playback right associated with the digital content rendering device representing an allotted measure of digital audio or video content that may be rendered by the digital content rendering device;

             determining whether the allotted measure of content has been rendered by the device; and

20        preventing further content rendering on the digital content rendering device if it is determined that the allotted measure of digital audio or video content that may be rendered by the digital content rendering device has previously been rendered by the device.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the allotted measure of digital audio or video content that may be rendered represents an amount of time that the digital content rendering device may render the digital audio or video content.

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24. The method of claim 22, wherein the playback right associated with the digital content rendering device is further associated with a user, and wherein the user is denied playback of any additional content items by the digital content rendering device once it is determined that the allotted measure of digital audio or video content that may  
10 be rendered by the digital content rendering device has previously been rendered by the device.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the playback right is determined based upon a subscription agreement between the user and a content provider.

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26. A digital content rendering apparatus comprising:  
a storage medium having stored therein programming instructions designed to enable the apparatus to

20 receive a request for playback of digital audio or video content stored on the apparatus,

determine an allotted playback duration for the apparatus,

determine an elapsed playback duration for the apparatus, the elapsed playback duration representing an amount of time previously consumed by the  
25 apparatus while rendering digital audio or video content,

determine whether a predetermined relationship between the elapsed playback duration and the allotted playback duration for the apparatus is satisfied, and

regulate playback of at least the requested digital audio or video content if the predetermined relationship between the elapsed playback duration and the allotted playback duration for the apparatus is determined to be satisfied; and at least one processor coupled with the storage medium to execute the programming instructions.

27. A digital content rendering apparatus comprising:

a storage medium having stored therein programming instructions designed to enable the apparatus to

render one of a plurality of audio or video content items,

determine an elapsed playback duration for which digital audio or video content has been rendered, and

regulate further content rendering by the digital content rendering apparatus if the elapsed playback duration satisfies a predetermined relationship with respect to an allotted playback duration; and

at least one processor coupled with the storage medium to execute the programming instructions.

28. A digital content rendering apparatus comprising:

a storage medium having stored therein programming instructions designed to

enable the digital content rendering apparatus to

identify a playback right associated with the digital content rendering apparatus representing an allotted measure of digital audio or video content that may be rendered by the digital content rendering apparatus,

determine whether the allotted measure of content has been rendered by the apparatus, and

prevent further content rendering on the digital content rendering apparatus if it is determined that the allotted measure of digital audio or video content that may be rendered by the digital content rendering apparatus has previously been rendered by the apparatus; and

at least one processor coupled with the storage medium to execute the programming instructions.

29. A machine readable medium having stored thereon machine executable instructions, the execution of which to implement a method comprising:

receiving a request for playback of digital audio or video content stored on the device;

determining an allotted playback duration for the device;

determining an elapsed playback duration for the device, the elapsed playback duration representing an amount of time previously consumed by the device while rendering digital audio or video content;

determining whether a predetermined relationship between the elapsed playback duration and the allotted playback duration for the device is satisfied; and

regulating playback of at least the requested digital audio or video content if the predetermined relationship between the elapsed playback duration and the allotted playback duration for the device is determined to be satisfied.

5 30. A machine readable medium having stored thereon machine executable instructions, the execution of which to implement a method comprising:

rendering one of a plurality of audio or video content items;

determining an elapsed playback duration for which digital audio or video content has been rendered; and

10 regulating further content rendering by the digital content rendering device if the elapsed playback duration satisfies a predetermined relationship with respect to an allotted playback duration.

31. A machine readable medium having stored thereon machine executable

15 instructions, the execution of which to implement a method comprising:

identifying a playback right associated with the digital content rendering device representing an allotted measure of digital audio or video content that may be rendered by the digital content rendering device;

20 determining whether the allotted measure of content has been rendered by the device; and

preventing further content rendering on the digital content rendering device if it is determined that the allotted measure of digital audio or video content that may be

rendered by the digital content rendering device has previously been rendered by the device.